

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2052

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care & Wellness
Ways & Means

Title: An act relating to delaying implementation of the health insurance partnership.

Brief Description: Delaying the implementation of the health insurance partnership.

Sponsors: Representative Cody; by request of Health Care Authority.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 2/19/09, 2/20/09 [DP];

Ways & Means: 2/27/09, 3/2/09 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Delays the operation of the Health Insurance Partnership until January 1, 2011, subject to sufficient funds.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Driscoll, Vice Chair; Campbell, Clibborn, Green, Herrera, Kelley, Moeller, Morrell and Pedersen.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Ericksen, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey and Hinkle.

Staff: Dave Knutson (786-7146)

Background:

The Health Insurance Partnership (Partnership) was created to provide an affordable source of health insurance coverage for small employers and their employees. The Partnership will provide health insurance coverage for employees of small employers by combining contributions from small employers and their employees with a public subsidy from the state. The Partnership is scheduled to begin offering health insurance coverage by March 1, 2009.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill:

The operation of the Partnership is delayed from March 1, 2009, to January 1, 2011, unless sufficient state or federal funds are provided to begin operation earlier.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The recent drop in state revenues brought on by the current recession makes it clear that the Partnership cannot begin operation on March 1, 2009.

(With concerns) Low-income workers need access to programs like the Partnership.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Richard Onizuka, Health Care Authority.

(With concerns) Bev Spears, Washington Community Action Network.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 22 members: Representatives Linville, Chair; Ericks, Vice Chair; Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dammeier, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Haigh, Hinkle, Hunt, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Pettigrew, Priest, Ross, Schmick, Seaquist and Sullivan.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392)

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Ways & Means Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Health Care & Wellness:

The substitute bill removes the authority to commence the Health Insurance Partnership program prior to January 1, 2011.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

None.

Persons Testifying: None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.